

Rotterdam, 8. vii. 1911



Greatly honoured Herr Professor!

I have just seen Prof. C. Snouck Hurgronje, and the following lines are the result of ^{our} ~~a~~ talk. I hope therefore that you will consider me introduced by him, as it was he who suggested my writing to you.

Moreover I have this year spent six months studying under Prof. J. B. Macdonald, and many a time 'd he talk to me of you, and your books were often the theme of

our discussions.

I am a missionary to Mohammedans in Egypt. I have known Arabic for 12 years, but having been imperfectly instructed in Arabic literature I have been taking a year for study.

In talking my affairs over with Prof. Snouck Hurgronje, he, after hearing all the circumstances, advised me to write to you, to ask you whether you would be inclined to allow me to study under your guidance

for two or three months. My ~~time~~ leave of absence expires in October and I am anxious to use the remaining months to the very best advantage. The branch of Arabic in which I am studying is Islamic theology — kalām, Sufism, falāfa — and so forth; and it is this that I should wish to pursue under the direction of a Continental professor.

Prof S. H. informed me that the semester at Buda Pesth is over, and that

your habit is to retire to a
country village. When I said
that I could not think
of intruding upon so celebrated
a man's holiday and
retirement, he said that
he saw no harm, never-
theless, in my writing to
you, as he did not
think it impossible that
you would like to discuss
your favourite themes,
"privatissimus", with a mission-
ary from the East. - I
presume there is an ~~a~~ inn
or a pensionnat where I
could stay.

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As regards ^{the} language to
afford ^a medium of instruction
I do not suppose there would
be difficulty, as I speak
Arabic, and I believe you
speak English, - while I
also have some knowledge of
German which of course I
am very anxious to increase.
Professor Snodgrass's idea
was that I should read
some book with you, like
the introduction to the ^{glossary} ~~glossary~~
for example, and that that
it could be made the ^{means} ~~basis~~
of introducing me to much
else. I would gladly

catch a living glimpse of
your methods in Hedih, as
~~illustrated~~ given us in your
wonderful Studies. Also
fkr, as in your Zaliviten.
And perhaps also a taste
of poetry

You will understand
that my own plans are not
fully made up, and that
this letter is to orient
me in the possibilities of
the case. Perhaps in
writing you would be good
enough to mention what
financial arrangement you

would wish to make.

I need hardly say
with what diffidence I write
to one whom all consider
~~the~~ ^{the} leader in Arabic
and Islamic Studies. But
for Prof. S.H.'s encouragement
I should not have dreamed
of doing so. To study under
you would be an honour
and an advantage impossible
to exceed.

I have the honour to be

Yours very faithfully

W. H. T. Gairdner

My address for a few
days will be

bei Herrn Prof. Karl Meinhof
Hamburg

Sierichstrasse 127